

II. REGIONAL PLANNING

A. The Regional Transportation Planning Process

The Regional Transportation Planning process is a long-range (minimum of 20 years) area-wide, continuous, coordinated, and comprehensive planning process. It involves federal, State, regional, local, tribal governments, and public and private organizations and individuals working together to plan how future regional transportation needs can and will be met. A detailed list of purposes of the regional transportation planning process is listed in Appendix D, page D–3, Regional Transportation Planning Process.

In preparing an RTP, the RTPA should convey to all stakeholders the complex nature of the Regional Transportation Planning Process. The plan should demonstrate how it is consistent with other plans and programs of regional significance. This might include, for example, discussing how projects developed in the RTP support local land use and population projections, are sensitive to identified environmental concerns, and address economic development and social equity issues identified in the General Plans.

B. Planning and Programming Process Overview

The State of California and federal transportation agencies allocate millions of dollars of planning funds to support California's transportation system. State and federal planning and programming legislation has been initiated and is periodically revised to provide guidance in the use of these funds to plan, maintain and improve the transportation system.

The Planning and Programming Process is the result of State and Federal legislation to assure that:

- The process is as fair as possible,
- Environmental considerations are addressed and,
- Funds are allocated in an equitable manner.

The chart in Appendix H-1 provides a simple diagram of a very complex process. Each entity in the chart reflects extensive staff support and legislative direction. The result is the planning and programming process that reflects the legislative and funding support of the California transportation system.

C. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is a major component of the Regional Transportation Planning Process. Each RTPA shall (Title 23 Sec. 134 (g)(4)), (Title 23 Sec. 135(e)) and (Title 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1)(c)) have a transportation planning process that includes a public involvement program. This program should have a reasonable opportunity for: private and public operators of transit and freight, tribal governments, communities, the general public and other interested/affected parties to participate early in the RTP development process.

The RTP shall (Title 40, CFR Sec. 93.105(b)), (Title 23, CFR Sec. 450.322(c)), and (Title 23, CFR Sec. 450.316(a)(13) and (b)(5)) be based on consultation with air and environmental agencies and the public during all stages of development. The public involvement process shall (Title 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1)) provide for; complete information, timely notice, full public access to key decisions; reasonable public access to technical and policy information and demonstrate explicit consideration of public input; and seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low income and minority households. At a minimum, the RTP should document the public involvement program, articulate the efforts made to maintain it, identify participating groups, and document efforts to recruit and facilitate a broad range of community representation.

RTPAs should consider the use of electronic transmission (such as the Internet, e-mail, and dedicated web-sites) and other methods to economically and efficiently communicate planning schedules, information, and products to all interested parties. Whatever the communication medium, maximum, effective public involvement is the objective.

D. Coordination/Consultation

In addition to having an extensive Public Involvement process, each RTPA should coordinate its regional transportation planning activities with all transportation providers, appropriate federal, State, and local agencies, environmental resource agencies, air districts and adjoining RTPAs. The RTP shall (Title 23, CFR Sec. 450.316(a)(13)) reflect consultation with resource and permit agencies to ensure early coordination with environmental resource protection and management plans.

To enhance consultation, the following federal agencies; the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) have adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU integrates the requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. All RTPAs are encouraged to use the process described in the MOU when developing their RTPs.

RTPs are required to be developed in coordination with local and regional air quality planning authorities (Title 23, Sec.134 (g)(3)) and shall (Title 40, CFR Sec. 93.105(b)) reflect specific consultation activities with air quality agencies on the development of the plan. RTPAs participate in air quality planning by providing vehicle counts for emissions inventories. They also develop methods to reduce transportation-related emissions. This participation helps lay the groundwork for future SIP conformity determinations. All RTPAs in nonattainment areas must coordinate their RTP development with the Air Resource Board in order to insure conformity with the SIP. The federal Clean Air Act requires SIP development to be coordinated with the transportation planning process (Title 42, Sec.7504 (b)). Detailed requirements may also be found in 40 CFR 51 and 93 (Transportation Conformity rules).

California cities and counties are required (California Government Code Title 7, Chapter 3, Article 5, Sections 65300 and Sections 65302) to develop General Plans for their communities, which include land use and circulation elements.

The RTPAs should be certain that the RTP and the circulation elements of the General Plans within their region are consistent. The RTPs should also be consistent with Regional Transportation Plans in adjacent regions.

The RTP should also be developed consistent with the objectives and guidance contained in the California Transportation Planning Directions Statement prepared in response to the following language in the 1999-2000 Budget Act:

In order to promote greater consistency and coordination between regional and interregional transportation planning and programming, the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, in cooperation with the California Transportation Commission, shall develop a California Transportation Planning Directions Statement that will provide strategic objectives and guidance for the development of regional transportation plans, regional transportation improvement programs, and the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program for the development of the State Transportation Improvement Program for the year 2000.

Appendix D, Coordination/Consultation, page D-4 lists the providers, agencies and organizations that should be considered for involvement in developing the RTP.

E. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Each RTPA should define a set of "program level" transportation system performance measures that reflect the goals and objectives adopted in the RTP. These performance measures are used to evaluate and select plan alternatives. Government Code Section 14530.1(b)(5) requires more detailed project specific "objective criteria for measuring system performance and cost effectiveness of candidate projects" in the STIP Guidelines. The program level performance measures in the RTP set the context for judging the effectiveness of the RTIP, as a program, in furthering the goals and objectives of the RTP, while the STIP Guidelines address performance measurements of specific projects.

Caltrans is considering system performance measurements for interregional planning and the setting of State planning and programming priorities. The State performance measures will focus on interregional trips between, into and through the regions. Caltrans will coordinate its performance measure activity with the RTPAs.

The California Transportation Plan, Transportation System Performance Measures Report (August 1998) identifies the following, "desired outcomes" for the transportation system, which may be addressed in each region's RTP.

Mobility / AccessibilityReliabilityCost-effectivenessSustainabilityEconomic Well BeingEnvironmental QualitySafety and SecurityEquityCustomer Satisfaction

Please see Appendix D, page D-5 for additional Performance Measurement considerations.

F. EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

In order to assure regional transportation planning consistency statewide, the CTC (Government Code Section 14032(a)) may request an evaluation of all Regional Transportation Plans. This evaluation is to be conducted by Caltrans for the purpose of identifying unresolved statewide transportation issues, laws and regulations that hamper implementation of RTPs, and to assemble a compilation of transportation needs and significant findings. The Commission may use this information in preparation of its Annual Report to the Legislature.